

10 Questions To Ask Before Hiring An Interior Designer

If you think an interior designer's role is simply to make a room pretty once the architects and builders have finished the job, think again. Interior designers bring a lot to the planning table, and when the designer and building team collaborate on the front end, design magic can truly happen.

You can find an interior designer to achieve any style and meet any budget; most are capable of working with a wide range of design trends and styles. Here are the top 10 questions to ask before hiring an interior designer.

What design services are offered?

Not all interior designers offer the same service package. Know what you'll be getting. Some services a designer might offer include:

- Design consultation
- Site measurement and assessment
- Space planning
- Design concepts
- Purchasing or procurement
- Project management

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SERVICES

How do you and your team stay organized?

How the designer structures a project will give you an indication of their time management as well as what to expect from the process. It is a good idea to start with an initial consultation, and then to discuss fees before jumping into the design process. The designer should also first present a concept before the details of the design are finalized.

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STRUCTURE

Where do you find inspiration? How do you stay up to date with current trends, technology, and codes?

Building code is a non-negotiable—your designer should take continuing education classes and attend appropriate trade events and seminars for that purpose. However, inspiration is just as vital. Magazines, Pinterest, blogs...interior designers should pay attention to these and follow other designers to be current, to let you know what the current offerings are.

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INSPIRATION

How do you prioritize your clients' budget throughout the project?

The designer should have a system in place—for most offices, it's a line item spreadsheet that the client has access to. Another particular question to ask is when most of the actual purchasing takes place.

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BUDGET

What are your references & credentials?

Ensure that who you hire has legitimate references and credentials. If the budget is limited, you can consider hiring an inexperienced interior designer, but be sure to double-check their references and work examples.

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CREDENTIALS

Pro-Tip:

"Thoughtful input from the interior designer at the design phase with an architect or in the pre-construction phase with a builder is helpful in everything from furniture placement to planning for special finishes to determining locations of electrical outlets and plumbing fittings, and prevents time-consuming and expensive backtracking later in the process."



Can you recommend local builders?

If the designer has an established relationship with contractors, you may get a discount. Even when there is no discount, a designer who can recommend great contractors is an asset. They say that you are only as good as your last project, so the work of a great contractor is essential to a designer's reputation.

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INDUSTRY PARTNERS

Have you done similar projects?

This is how you discover a designer's experience. If you're looking to hire an interior designer for apartment design, it would be beneficial to see other apartments the designer has completed. If they have worked on similar projects, you may request a before, in-process, and after photo to see whether you like the outcome.

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TIMELINE

What is your favorite interior design style?

Determining their style preference is crucial. Even though an interior designer should be able to work in any style that a client wants, that's not always the case. If the designer's styles match yours, the whole process will be much smoother.

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STYLE PREFERENCE

What was your most recent interior design project?

You can delve a little deeper and ask for a sneak peek of the project. The designer's most recent project will give you an idea of whether the designer uses the latest in design trends and innovation. You may also ask for a reference from the last client to see if they were happy with the designer's work.

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RECENT PROJECTS

How can I live better in my home?

Don't be too hard on the designer with this vague question. The aim of finding out how to live better is to see if the designer knows what is on the market. Their response will indicate whether they are knowledgeable on the innovation front, especially regarding smart living.

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SMART LIVING